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ACDA Aide Faulted on Security

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Administration officials are seeking permanently to lift the security clearances of an employee of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency who allegedly mishandled about 500 documents, including some of the U.S. government's most sensitive top-secret intelligence about Pakistan's efforts to build a nuclear bomb.

The employee, Kathleen Strang, improperly removed the documents from a storage vault at the State Department, repeatedly left them overnight in an open safe accessible to dozens of people without security clearances and then ignored several warnings from supervisors over a period of months, according to portions of an internal investigative report filed in a related suit in U.S. District Court here.

Strang said she had committed only a technical infraction of regulations and no harm had resulted, according to sources familiar with the case.

U.S. security officials have no evidence that anyone saw or took any documents from Strang's safe. But the internal investigative file alleges that she gave portions of some sensitive documents to officials of the South Korean government in September 1984, apparently hoping to prove that Pakistan was developing a nuclear bomb and thus discourage the South Koreans from providing any technical assistance that might aid the Pakistanis.

Strang said she gave only unclassified material to the South Koreans, sources said.

In July 1985, U.S. officials removed Strang's safe from her fourth-floor office at the State Department and then spent months conducting a damage assessment. Inside the safe, sources said, the officials found documents bearing the code-words UMBRA and MO-RAY—terms used for highly sensitive communications intercepts gathered by the National Security Agency. They also found computer floppy disks with other documents stored on them. The investigative file alleges that Strang used a secretary without a proper security clearance to transcribe classified information onto the disks.

When Lt. Gen. William E. Odom, director of the National Security Agency, heard about the matter, he sent a handwritten letter to ACDA's director, Kenneth L. Adelman, calling what the investigators found one of the worst security violations he had ever seen, according to sources. Odom threatened to cut off ACDA's access to sensitive intelligence unless immediate and severe steps were taken, the sources said.

The case has caused particular concern among U.S. intelligence officials, who said someone with access to the documents could draw a full portrait of the methods and techniques used by U.S. intelligence agencies to monitor nuclear tests and weapons developments in other countries, including the Soviet Union.

"Other than early warning intelligence on a surprise attack, it's the most vital function we perform," said a senior Reagan administration intelligence official.

Disclosure of an allegedly serious breach of internal security inside the ACDA came after several highly publicized efforts by the administration to block leaks of classified information, including a threat by Odom and CIA Director William J. Casey to prosecute news organizations that disclose secret "communications intelligence." Much of the material in Strang's safe was based

on communications intercepts, according to sources.

At the time Strang's safe was seized, her security clearances were suspended and she was placed on leave, with pay, from her job in charge of monitoring the Pakistani nuclear program.

An internal ACDA panel recommended that her clearances be revoked permanently. She has appealed that decision to Adelman, and he held a closed-door five-hour hearing on her appeal yesterday but made no final decision, sources said. Strang also filed a lawsuit under the Freedom of Information and Privacy acts, seeking monetary damages and demanding deletions from her personnel file; this lawsuit resulted in the placement of portions of the investigative file in court records.

Strang declined to comment on the case.

ACDA security chief Berne Indahl, who conducted an internal investigation, said in a memorandum that "all the material in her safe, marked or unmarked, was considered by State's [intelligence division] to be compromised. Classified material was taken home, to meetings and overseas. Classified material was provided to foreign governments without proper authorization." Indahl's memo is contained in the court papers.

In response to questions, the ACDA released a brief statement confirming that a safe was "sequestered" on July 1, 1985, as part of a security investigation of an unnamed employee.

Strict regulations govern the use of classified material by federal officials, in part because intelligence officials assume that hostile countries attempt to place agents in janitorial, secretarial or other routine jobs at certain federal agencies.

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LT. GEN. WILLIAM E. ODOM
... threatened to end ACDA's access

As the agency that is responsible for all arms control issues, the ACDA receives sensitive information from all over the government: policy papers from the White House, intelligence reports from NSA and the CIA, technical data on nuclear technology from the Department of Energy.

The most sensitive data is code-worded and is supposed to be available only to those with a need to know. At the State Department, such code-word material is kept in a sixth-floor vault where authorized officials can read it, but not remove it.

One of Strang's coworkers, who was not identified by name, was quoted in the investigative file as saying: "During mid-1984 to mid-1985 she had almost total contempt for routine security procedures. I was usually the first one in the office in the mornings. Many times I would find her safe not only unlocked but wide open . . . I asked her about this situation. Her response was to the effect that if I wanted her safe locked I should do it myself."

The investigative file also outlined the circumstances surrounding the South Korean incident. Carl-

ton B. Stoiber, a former ACDA official, said that during a September 1984 arms control meeting in Seoul, Strang "gave classified information to the Korean government that was not cleared. It was very unsettling . . . I was shocked and upset at her conduct. I swore I would never send or have her on a delegation again."

Another person at the same meeting said, "I was amazed she passed out the classified information to the Koreans. I was wondering how much damage this may have caused and whether or not I should rudely take from the Koreans the papers she had just passed out."

Stoiber reported the incident by cable to the State Department when it occurred, one official said.

According to sources, Strang and her attorney have said that some of her fellow workers have a personal grudge against her and this accounts, in part, for the allegations.

Staff researchers Ferman Patterson and Barbara Feinman contributed to this report.